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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Samoa, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay and Venezuela: revised draft resolution

Strengthening of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights/Centre for Human Rights

The General Assembly,

Recalling, inter alia, its resolutions 48/141 of 20 December 1993 and 50/187 of 22 December 1995, and bearing in mind all relevant resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Human Rights, including Commission resolution 1996/82 of 24 April 1996,

Recalling the request to the Secretary-General contained in paragraph 37 of its resolution 50/214 of 23 December 1995 to establish within the biennium 1996-1997 a new branch whose primary responsibilities would include the promotion and protection of the right to development,

Reaffirming that the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms must be considered as a priority objective of the United

Nations in accordance with its purposes and principles, in particular the purpose of international cooperation,

Recalling that in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, stressed the importance of strengthening the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat,[1]

Taking into account that in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action the World Conference on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General and the General Assembly to take immediate steps to increase substantially the resources for the human rights programme, from within the existing and future regular budgets of the United Nations, and to take urgent steps to seek increased extrabudgetary resources,[2]

Taking into account also the establishment of the post of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the mandate for the post, including its coordinating role and its overall supervision of the Centre, as well as the request by the General Assembly in resolution 48/141 for appropriate staff and resources to enable the High Commissioner to fulfil his mandate,

Noting with concern that the response to these requests has not been commensurate with the needs, resulting in a serious and continuing imbalance between the mandates assigned to the High Commissioner and the Centre by the competent bodies of the United Nations system in the field of human rights and the resources available to fulfil all of these mandates,

Taking into account that the responsibilities of the High Commissioner include, inter alia, engaging in a dialogue with all Governments in the implementation of his mandate with a view to the promotion and protection of all human rights, and rationalizing, adapting, strengthening and streamlining the United Nations machinery in the field of human rights with a view to improving its efficiency and effectiveness,

Taking also into account the fact that in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the World Conference on Human Rights urged United Nations organs, bodies and the specialized agencies whose activities deal with human rights to cooperate in order to strengthen, rationalize and streamline their activities, taking into account the need to avoid unnecessary duplication,

Bearing in mind that Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations states that the paramount consideration in the employment of the staff of the Secretariat and in the determination of the conditions of the service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity, and that due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff of the Secretariat on as wide a geographical basis as possible;

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[1] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III, sect. II, para. 13.

[2] Ibid., para. 9.

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights/Centre for Human Rights,[3] and of the note by the Secretary-General on the composition of the staff of the Centre for Human Rights[4] as well as the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,[5]

Taking note with appreciation of the information provided by the High Commissioner with regard to the restructuring of the Centre for Human Rights with the aim of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Centre and ensuring that all its mandates can be implemented,

Considering that this process should contribute to the strengthening of the functional framework for integrated and consolidated activities of the Secretariat in the field of human rights,

Emphasizing that, while further improvement in the function and efficiency of the Centre, together with a strong emphasis on good management practices, is needed in order to enable the Centre to fulfil all mandates entrusted to it and cope with its constantly increasing workload, good management practices need to be complemented by resources commensurate with mandates,

1. Supports and encourages the efforts of the Secretary-General to enhance the role and further improve the functioning of the Centre for Human Rights, as an integral part of the Secretariat of the United Nations, under the overall supervision of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

2. Reiterates the need to ensure that all the necessary human, financial, material and personnel resources are provided from the regular budget of the United Nations without delay to the United Nations human rights programme to enable it to carry out the mandates efficiently, effectively and expeditiously, having due regard to the need to finance and implement activities of the United Nations relating to development;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to enhance the capability of the High Commissioner and the Centre to fulfil effectively their mandates and their ability to carry out mandated operational activities and to coordinate efficiently with other relevant departments of the Secretariat, as well as other organs, bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including on logistical and administrative questions;

4. Supports fully the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner in their efforts to strengthen the human rights activities of the United Nations, inter alia, through reorganization of the structure of the Centre to improve its efficiency and effectiveness;

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[3] A/51/641.

[4] A/51/650.

[5] A/51/36.

5. Encourages increased cooperation and coordination on human rights issues between the High Commissioner, acting within his mandate, and other departments and offices of the United Nations Secretariat;

6. Requests the Administrative Committee on Coordination to ensure that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights/Centre for Human Rights can participate fully in all mechanisms related to the follow-up to major United Nations conferences, in particular the inter-agency task forces established for this purpose, and urges the High Commissioner to take an active part in this regard;

7. Requests the High Commissioner to continue to keep all States informed on a regular basis of the ongoing process of restructuring the Centre, inter alia through informal open briefing sessions;

8. Encourages the High Commissioner, within his mandate as set out in General Assembly resolution 48/141, to continue to play an active role in promoting and protecting human rights, including by preventing human rights violations throughout the world, and, in this context requests the Secretary-General to support activities proposed by the High Commissioner;

9. Decides to continue its consideration of this question at its fifty-second session under the agenda item "Human rights questions".